

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date: April 21, 2004

Division: County Administrator

Bulk Item: Yes _____ No _____

Department: County Administrator

AGENDA ITEM WORDING:

Approval of the creation of five positions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of County government.

ITEM BACKGROUND:

In past years, the County has undertaken significant staffing reductions for the sake of providing economies to the services. Unfortunately, some of the reductions and the lack of creating new positions as identified has resulted in some circumstances where the County is unable to meet its obligations. At various sectors of County government, staffing is running very thin and the problems of recruitment and retention have become serious.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION:

N/A

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approval of the four positions identified in the attached document.

TOTAL COST: \$167,147 + Benefits

BUDGETED: Yes No ☒

COST TO COUNTY: \$167,147 + Benefits

SOURCE OF FUNDS:

\$70,254 + Benefits – County-wide Ad Valorem

\$96,894 + Benefits – District 1 Ad Valorem

REVENUE PRODUCING: Yes ___ No ☒ AMOUNT PER MONTH ___ Year ___

APPROVED BY: County Atty _____ OMB/Purchasing _____ Risk Management _____

DIVISION DIRECTOR APPROVAL:

James L. Roberts

DOCUMENTATION: Included X To Follow _____ Not Required

DISPOSITION:

AGENDA ITEM # *R4*

JUSTIFICATION FOR ADDITIONAL POSITIONS

(Information for this summary provided by the County Attorney and the Fire Chief.)

As identified in the attached agenda item summary, the County is in need of additional staffing in a variety of areas. Many of those will become the subject of discussion between the County Commission and the new Administrator after that individual has had an opportunity to work more closely with the County organization. In addition, the proposed budget for fiscal year 2005 may contain some recommendations for additional positions. The bottom line is that it is time that the County addresses some of the areas that have remained unattended to for a variety of reasons over the past few years.

However, there are some positions which need immediate attention and they are outlined below. The County Attorney, the Fire Chief, and the Administration feel that it is necessary to address these issues quickly.

CONTRACT MONITOR

Recent events and audits have clearly identified the need for the County to modernize its contract administration operation and to have a full-time contract monitoring operation. If Monroe County becomes more involved in a wide variety of contracts dealing with almost every aspect of County government, being sure those contracts are adhered to becomes even more significant. In the past, the Administration has addressed this issue with previous Commissions who were apparently more concerned with the cost for the position rather than the importance of the function that has now become so evident. This position would be located within the County

Attorney's office and would carry the authority of the County Attorney in dealing with contract issues.

The lack of a cohesive and comprehensive unit for monitoring County contracts and leases sometimes results in situations which require inordinate resources to correct problems after the fact rather than address potential problems on a proactive basis, which is usually a more efficient and less costly endeavor. When problems are addressed on an after-the-fact, clean-up-the-mess basis, projects are delayed which often costs money, solutions may be less desirable because agencies (including state and federal as well as county & municipal) have commenced, or committed to, certain operations costly or impossible to alter, and everyone involved interacts in a more hostile, or at least more stressful, environment. The County has a number of departments, and some are better than others at monitoring their contracts. However, they often do not enjoy the knowledge of other contractual arrangements or even the impact which other County departments or functions may have on their own operations or ability to transact business.

It is proposed that a county contract monitor position be established to coordinate those contracts which may impact more than one department (or vice versa), monitor contracts to ensure that appropriate renewals and RFP/RFQ/RFB's are issued on a timely basis, and to monitor compliance with terms. Having one central person to monitor all agreements for timing and compliance issues can prevent the County becoming inextricably tied to continuance of a less than satisfactory contract. This comment in no way is intended to reflect on any person or position in any of the departments as each department or division is often tasked by the Commission with particular projects which may impact their ability to address the mundane and routine matters effectively.

Further, the contract monitor can assist in the proactive preparation of contracts to avoid contracting pitfalls which may exist in many of our current contracts and can insure consistency in all contracts throughout the County.

COUNTY ATTORNEY STAFF ASSISTANT

The current County Attorney has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the legal operation in the County. In terms of bringing more legal issues in-house and actively pursuing the payment of liens, etc., the County Attorney has increased the importance of the office. Especially with the addition of the Contract Monitor, the County Attorney feels an additional need for a Staff Assistant.

Since early 2003, the County Attorney's office has become more proactive in its representation of the Board of County Commissioners and departments. By way of example, staff attorneys have litigated several actions and advised County departments on issues that, in prior years, would have been referred to outside counsel paid at a greater rate. Staff has also undertaken the time consuming process of resolving dozens of outstanding code enforcement liens, either through negotiation or litigation, which had been left un-enforced in recent years. Those efforts have resulted in unexpected revenue in excess of \$100,000.00, which would more than offset the cost of an additional staff person. Moreover, legal staff recently began providing legal services to at least one constitutional officer, which marks a departure from past practice. Finally, this summer the State will implement the revisions to Article V of the Florida Constitution, which will reassign various responsibilities among the State and the various counties for funding the Court system. As a result, the County Attorney's office will be vested with additional

responsibilities, which will consume more time than the duties being shifted from the office to the State consume.

In light of the increased work load, the Board created an additional Assistant County Attorney position in late 2003. That position was filled in early 2004 when Assistant County Attorney Pedro Mercado was hired. As a result, the County Attorney's office now employs five full time attorneys (as opposed to three fulltime assistants and a part time County Attorney in prior years) but only three support personnel. While the increased activity of the office has increased the amount of work normally assigned to support staff, the lack of an additional staff person has forced attorneys to perform some tasks that could be performed equally as well by support staff. This shift fails to maximize the efficiency that the new attorney position should promote.

In the past, the County Attorney's office employed at least four support personnel, and sometimes more. Through downsizing and attrition, that number dwindled to three. If the Board wants to maximize the effect of hiring an additional attorney, at least one additional staff assistant position should be created.

FIRE FIGHTER/PARAMEDIC POSITIONS

Since coming to Monroe County, the Fire Chief has been evaluating personnel needs for the fire rescue services. Those needs pertain to providing adequate levels of staffing in support of and in conjunction with volunteer operations. During the forthcoming budget and beyond, the Fire Chief will be making recommendations to the County Commission.

However, there is an immediate need that must be addressed. That need is for increased staffing for the Conch Key area. Although the Fire Chief would certainly feel more comfortable in having additional personnel than requested here, this is a first step in helping to solve what is an imminent situation.

There is a pressing need for increasing the staffing at Station 17 (Conch Key) to a minimum of four personnel on duty. Station 17's response zone encompasses Conch Key, Duck Key (including the Hawks Cay Resort), and the area of Grassy Key east of Mile Marker 57. In addition, Station 17 assists on structural fire calls in the remainder of the City of Marathon as well as all of Long Key, including Layton. There are currently three personnel on duty each 24 hour shift at Station 17. They are expected to staff an engine (pumper), a tanker, and/or an advanced life support (ALS) rescue unit based on the nature of the call when it comes in. For structure fires in their primary response zone, all three respond on Engine 17. For motor vehicle accidents (MVAs), they respond two aboard Rescue 17 and one aboard Engine 17.

There is no volunteer fire department corporation associated with Station 17.

Volunteer response to assist Station 17 has recently come from the Layton Volunteer Fire Department (Station 18) to the east. Revisions to Florida Administrative Code, Rule 69A-62, will shortly require that any firefighter engaging in structural firefighting operations inside the exclusionary (hazard) zone be at least Firefighter I certified. Of all the well-intentioned members of Station 18 who reside in their district, only one member holds such firefighter certification. Florida Statute prohibits any firefighter from engaging in interior structural firefighting, in the absence of a trapped occupant who can be rescued, until there are at least four certified firefighters assembled at the scene, two of

whom perform the fire attack and the other two who must remain available to rescue the original two if they become lost or trapped. It is impractical at this point to rely on the membership of the Layton Volunteer Fire Department to provide the needed firefighter staffing for their own station, let alone assistance to Station 17.

The addition of three additional positions to Station 17 will provide one additional crew member for each of the three shifts, providing four on-duty personnel for each 24-hour tour of duty. This staffing level would allow two personnel to be assigned to Engine 17 and two to Rescue 17. On a structure fire they could roll together and immediately assemble the four required firefighters to initiate an interior attack. (Interior attacks are the industry standard after a risk/benefit analysis has determined that properly protected firefighters can enter the building and attempt to position a hose line at the seat of the fire. This results in much more efficient water application resulting in reduced water damage and quicker extinguishment.)

COST

Contract Monitor	\$43,560.77	(Base Salary)
Staff Assistant	\$26,692.22	"
Three Firefighter Paramedics	<u>\$96,893.85</u>	"

TOTAL: *\$167,146.84

*Salary figures do not include benefit numbers.